

Dubai British School... 



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational needs and disabilities



Innovation

## Inspection Report 2015-2016

**Dubai British School**

Curriculum: UK

Overall rating: Very good

[Read more about the school](#) 

  
www.khda.gov.ae

“Great achievements remind us to be humble, but we should always be determined to do more”



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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## School information

<b>General information</b>  	Location	Emirates Hills
	Type of school	Private
	Opening year of school	2005
	Website	www.dubaibritishschool.ae
	Telephone	04-3619361
	Address	P O Box 37828, Springs 3, Emirates Hill, Dubai
	Principal	Mr. Mark Ford
	Language of instruction	English
	Inspection dates	4 to 9 November 2015
<b>Students</b>  	Gender of students	Boys and girls
	Age range	3-18
	Grades or year groups	Foundation Stage 1 to Year 13
	Number of students on roll	1,097
	Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
	Number of Emirati students	0
	Number of students with SEND	69
	Largest nationality group of students	UK
<b>Teachers / Support staff</b>  	Number of teachers	78
	Largest nationality group of teachers	UK
	Number of teaching assistants	25
	Teacher-student ratio	1:14
	Number of guidance counsellors	1
	Teacher turnover	23%
<b>Curriculum</b>  	Educational permit / Licence	UK
	Main curriculum	UK
	External tests and examinations	GCSE, A level
	Accreditation	CIS
	National Agenda benchmark tests	ISA

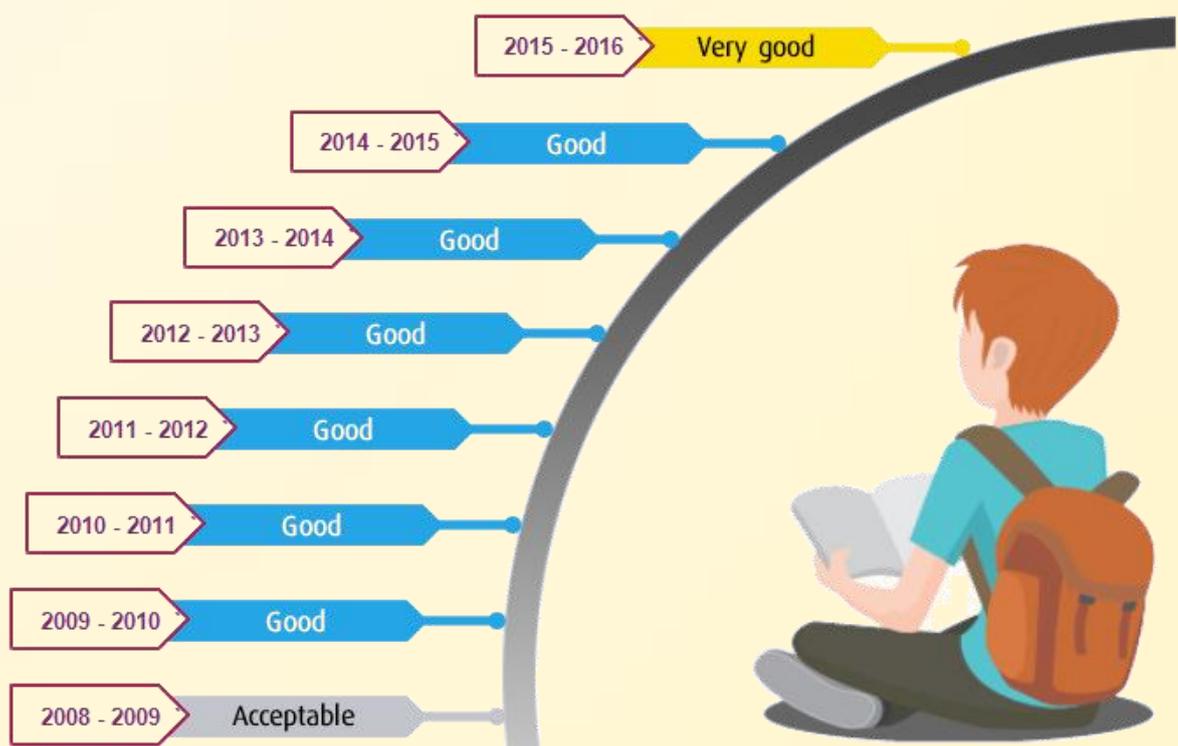


## Summary for parents and the community

**Dubai British School** was inspected by DSIB from 4 to 9 November 2015. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **very good**.

In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by the school, inspectors considered six key standards of performance. Inspectors looked at children's attainment and progress in key subjects, their learning skills and their personal and social development. They judged how effective teaching and the assessment of learning were across the school. Inspectors considered how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside classrooms, met the educational needs of all children. They judged how well the school protected and supported children. In addition inspectors judged the effectiveness of leadership and governance, including management, staffing, facilities and resources.

The inspection judgements were drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observing children learning in lessons, looking at their work, talking with children, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and reviewing the parents', teachers' and senior students' surveys.





### How well did the school perform overall?

Overall, **Dubai British School** provided **very good** education for its students.

- The school provided a high quality learning environment and very good teaching that enabled students to achieve high standards in many subjects. Progress was improving in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language, although attainment was still behind that of other subjects. Children benefited from an excellent start to their education in an inspiring and vibrant Foundation Stage.
- Students across all phases had a very strong sense of personal responsibility and mature attitudes. They had good knowledge and understanding of Islamic values and the culture of the UAE. Students were responsible members of the school community, and they played an active role in the wider communities.
- Teachers increasingly encouraged students to learn and think for themselves. In many lessons, the learning atmosphere was dynamic and productive, helped by the excellent relationships between staff and students.
- The rich curriculum throughout the school provided breadth and interest to students' learning.
- Students were right to feel very safe in school; the support for their personal and social development was outstanding. The provision for students with special education need and disabilities (SEND) was excellent.
- The school's success was as a direct result of outstanding leadership, fronted by the principal. Senior leaders were very focused on providing the best possible education for the students. They knew the school extremely well and so were able to highlight the areas that need further improvement. Middle leaders and subject leaders were also integral to the school's development but their impact was more varied.
- Governors and parents played a full and active role in supporting the leaders. The school's senior and middle leaders, with the community as a whole, had worked hard in response to the recommendations from the previous report and had achieved most of their goals.



### What did the school do well?

- Students developed an excellent work ethic, self-reliance, independence and community spirit. Behaviour and relationships were outstanding.
- Very good teaching enabled students to make very good progress in most subjects and attain highly in English, mathematics and science.
- Children benefited from a Foundation Stage which was excellent in almost every aspect.
- The rich and varied curriculum enhanced the learning of students across the school, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Senior leaders, ably supported by governors, were highly focused on school development and had succeeded in improving key aspects of the school.



### What does the school need to do next?

- Ensure that assessment is rigorous and aligned with curriculum standards, and that its resultant data is used shrewdly to improve teaching and students' progress, especially, but not exclusively, in Arabic and Islamic education.
- Strengthen students' understanding of Islamic values and the culture of the UAE.



### How well did the school provide for students with special educational needs and disabilities?

- School leaders had established an inclusive ethos where all students were welcomed and valued. Well-qualified, and experienced specialist support staff and class teachers, successfully helped students overcome their difficulties with learning and personal development.
- Thorough systems were in place to identify students with SEND and qualified staff assessed the students when they started school. Parents and teachers also made valuable contributions to the identification process.
- The school worked very closely with parents and was effective in involving them in their children's academic and personal development. Parents valued the opportunities for regular contact with staff to review their children's progress, as well as talking through any concerns.
- Learning support staff were very skilled at understanding the different needs and learning styles of students with SEND and made effective changes to activities to ensure that students could meet their targets and develop confidence.
- Frequent checks were made of students' academic and personal progress. Teachers made good use of the information to plan and change support programmes to match students' needs closely. As a result, most students made rapid progress over time. Students were actively involved in designing their support and contributed by telling their teachers what they found difficult, and how others could help them learn more effectively.

## National Agenda Parameter



In 2014, H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of UAE, and Ruler of Dubai, launched the UAE National Agenda 2021, with education being a prime focus. The National Agenda includes two major objectives developed with the intent of placing the UAE among the most successful countries that provide world-class education. By 2021, it is expected that the UAE will feature in the top twenty countries in the 'Programme for International Student Assessment' (PISA) test and in the top fifteen countries in the 'Trends in Mathematics and Science Studies' (TIMSS) test.

In response to this, each participating school was issued a report on their students' performance in these international assessments and in addition, they were provided with clear targets for improving their performance. This academic year, KHDA introduced the National Agenda Parameter, which is a method for measuring and monitoring schools' progress towards achieving their individual National Agenda targets through the use of external benchmarking assessments.

### Main points:

- The school met the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter.
- Progress towards the National Agenda targets was not secure.
- The school had promoted awareness and understanding of the National Agenda and its targets among most of its stakeholders. Students were able to talk knowledgeably about the National Agenda and the UAE's desire to be one of the foremost nations globally. They were aware of forthcoming international benchmark tests that they would be taking later in the month. School leaders intended to promote awareness within the wider community.
- Previous international benchmark tests had informed curriculum review. There was systematic planning for students' progression in skills and knowledge. Professional development had been provided to develop teachers' questioning skills to support students' learning. A current focus for curriculum review was to offer better opportunities for students in Years 7 to 9 to acquire the requisite skills to improve performance in international tests and GCSE examinations.
- Students' skills were improving. Children in the Foundation Stage were increasingly able to demonstrate their higher order thinking skills as a result of effective questioning and the use of high quality resources. In primary, teaching promoted critical thinking and independent learning skills. Provision was similar in the secondary phase.
- Students were encouraged to bring their own devices to school so as to enhance independence in learning and to allow opportunities for research and access. Teachers often referred students to websites for extension assignments outside lessons. In science, students demonstrated imaginative skills in sharing and presenting their learning using technology.



Overall school performance

Very good ↑

1. Students' achievement

		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Islamic education</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Arabic as a first language</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not applicable
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Good ↑	Acceptable	Not applicable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Good ↑	Acceptable	Not applicable
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Good ↑	Good ↑	Not applicable
<b>English</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding	Outstanding
	<b>Progress</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding
<b>Mathematics</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑	Very good ↑	Outstanding
	<b>Progress</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑	Very good ↑	Outstanding ↑
<b>Science</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Outstanding ↑
	<b>Progress</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Very good ↓	Very good ↑

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Learning skills</b>	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Outstanding

## 2. Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Good	Good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
Assessment	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

## 4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Curriculum adaptation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

## 5. The protection, care, guidance and support of students

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Care and support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

## 6. Leadership and management

	All phases
The effectiveness of leadership	Outstanding
School self-evaluation and improvement planning	Very good ↑
Parents and the community	Outstanding
Governance	Outstanding
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding



## Main inspection report

The Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) is responsible for inspecting and reporting on the standards reached by students and the quality of education provided in Dubai's private schools.

### Judgements are made on a six-point scale



Using this scale, the *Main inspection report* contains the judgements about the different aspects, phases and subjects that form the work of the school.

It provides the reasons for the answers to the questions in the *Summary for parents and the community*:

- How well did the school perform overall?
- What did the school do well?
- What does the school need to do next?

## 1. Students' achievement

### Foundation Stage

Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Not applicable	Not applicable
Arabic as a first language	Not applicable	Not applicable
Arabic as an additional language	Not applicable	Not applicable
English	Outstanding	Outstanding
Mathematics	Outstanding	Outstanding
Science	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Most children entered the Foundation Stage with age-appropriate language and communication skills in English. They made at least good, and often better progress because of the many opportunities to develop speaking, listening and understanding. In Foundation Stage 1, most groups were beginning to produce rudimentary writing and understood that it carried meaning. They listened well, asked questions and followed instructions. They talked routinely with their friends often making up imaginative stories during role play. By Foundation Stage 2 children were increasingly confident in speaking with accuracy. They used their knowledge of letters and sounds to read words of increasing difficulty. They were beginning to write legibly and spell. By the time they left the Foundation Stage, most groups had attained high levels in literacy as a result of excellent progress.
- Almost all children could count well and match a group of objects to a number. By Foundation Stage 2, children worked with numbers to at least 20, and performed practical operations in addition and subtraction. They could use tallies to count small groups. Most groups of children were able to write and solve their own number sentences. Children understood and used the abstract symbols of addition, subtraction and equals. They sorted objects into sets. They were able to identify missing numbers on a 100 square by looking at patterns and the number which preceded or followed the missing one. They could see and continue simple patterns as well as identify two-dimensional shapes in the environment. Most children were able to find half of a number using pictorial representation.
- In science most children made better than expected progress in their attainment of knowledge and understanding of the world. Learning in science was enhanced further through practical activities such as a visit to the turtle centre where they discovered that turtles are hatched from eggs. Children planted sunflowers and effectively supported them to grow. They used scientific equipment, such as magnifiers to study objects closely, as well as scientific language to articulate their findings. For example, they studied dead fish and described their size, shape and texture before reaching the hypotheses that fish have fins to help them balance and clams live in shells to avoid being eaten. Different groups made similarly outstanding progress.

### Primary

Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Acceptable	Good ↑
Arabic as a first language	Acceptable	Good ↑
Arabic as an additional language	Good ↑	Good ↑
English	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding ↑
Mathematics	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding ↑
Science	Outstanding	Outstanding

- In Islamic education students' attainment levels were in line with national curriculum standards. Internal assessments were high but without reliable external international benchmarking. In Year 1, students could recall the story of Adam and Eve and by Year 2 students were able to give examples of honesty and how it was related to their own lives. Recitation skills were practised at the start of each lessons with some simple verses of the Holy Qur'an to ensure retention. Students made good progress in lessons when they were given the opportunity to express themselves. Their learning was enhanced when the subject was taught in English.
- Most students' achievements were broadly in line with curriculum expectations in Arabic as a first language. Students readily understood teachers' explanations in standard Arabic and responded well to instructions. Most could communicate their ideas with reasonable accuracy but lapsed into colloquial Arabic when unsure. They could decode text moderately well and read with some accuracy. Writing was fairly accurate with age-expected spelling mistakes and grammar errors. All students could summarise short stories. There had been an improvement in attainment since last year, although the trend in student attainment overall was still acceptable. In lessons, the majority of students made good progress against appropriate lesson objectives, especially in reading and writing. Girls outperformed boys and the progress of students with SEND was similar to that of their counterparts.
- In the absence of external benchmarks, attainment data revealed that there had been an improvement in students' achievement in Arabic as an additional language over the last three years. In Year 1, students could speak with confidence about family members, write letters and identify common words, as well as differentiating between genders. Year 6 students acquired new vocabulary well which they applied in their writing to form sentences, for example, about healthy foods and relating their importance to real life. Students made slower progress, however, in reading and writing especially in Years 5 and 6. More able students developed better language skills when given the opportunity to do so in class.
- Attainment in English, as measured against national and international curriculum standards was outstanding. Students listened carefully in lessons and became increasingly confident and articulate speakers. By Year 6, they could read a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction with enjoyment and understanding. Writing skills developed consistently and students learned how to take notes, develop a wide vocabulary and write at speed. Year 3 students understood a simplified version of Romeo and Juliet, and eagerly drafted their own play scripts of the story. Excellent use of technology made learning environments exciting and contributed to students' progress. In lessons, all groups of students, including those with SEND, received precisely targeted support and were set challenges that enabled them to make outstanding progress.

- In mathematics, attainment as measured against the English National Curriculum standards was outstanding. Progress was also outstanding. In the International School Assessment (ISA) tests, students achieved outstanding levels. By the end of the phase, students could classify three-dimensional shapes, use correct technical mathematical vocabulary, find fractions of numbers and solve fraction problems. Attainment data showed a steady growth of improvement. Progress in lessons was very good overall; boys consistently performed better than girls. Progress made by students with SEND was very good.
- The attainment and progress of most students in science were above age-related expectations. Attainment over the past three years had been improving and was consistently above curriculum and national standards. Students were confident and competent in the full range of practical skills. They frequently used scientific knowledge and understanding effectively in their written and verbal explanations, solving problems and reporting scientific findings. Their scientific terminology was clearly developing, an example being an animated discussion between students about the length of wire affecting the brightness of a light bulb. Investigational work rapidly developed students' knowledge which they used to relate to the world around them. Progress of the different groups of students was generally outstanding.

Secondary		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language	Acceptable	Good ↑
English	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑
Mathematics	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
Science	Very good ↑	Very good ↓

- In Islamic education, students' attainment levels in internal assessments were age-appropriate and in line with national curriculum standards. Most Year 7 students could form well-structured sentences about facts in the Holy Qur'an. Students in Year 9 could talk and write sentences which related expectations of manners when travelling. Only a few students showed a deep understanding of Holy Qur'an. Acceptable progress was achieved by most students. Progress was better when students recited verses from the Holy Qur'an particularly by non-Arab students. Low expectations by a minority of teachers constrained the progress of high ability students in this phase.
- Attainment for most students in Arabic as a first language were just in line with national curriculum expectations, especially in the upper years. Most students had acceptable listening skills but they had some difficulty understanding particular literary and abstract terms. Students could communicate appropriately but often mixed standard and colloquial language which resulted in a lack of fluency and confidence when they spoke. Reading skills were adequate but at a basic level. This resulted in challenge for a significant minority of students when explaining their understanding of literary texts. Most students struggled with the process of extended writing. Although they could write long paragraphs, their written work was often simplistic in structure and vocabulary. In all lessons seen, most students made acceptable progress. Students generally made better progress in listening and reading than in speaking and writing.

- In the absence of external benchmarks, attainment in Arabic as an additional language was acceptable. Trends in attainment were acceptable over time. When listening, students were able to identify specific facts, details and opinions but with some difficulty. Students could speak previously learned sentences with fairly accurate pronunciation but they lacked fluency and confidence. Students were unable to engage in genuine conversations about familiar topics. Most could read with reasonable accuracy and with an acceptable level of comprehension. Students could write sentences with connectives but often made frequent spelling and grammatical mistakes. In lessons, the majority of students made above expected progress, especially in reading and writing. There was no significant difference in progress between groups of students, including those with SEND.
- Attainment in English was outstanding when measured against national and international standards. Older students' achievements in external examinations were excellent. Most students could write fluently for different purposes and they had sophisticated understanding of language such as, for example the persuasiveness of advertising. They showed excellent reading skills when studying texts such as 'Great Expectations'. Some students used laptops and mobile phones to carry out research independently and they were eager to discuss characterisation and themes in the poem, 'The Lady of Shalott'. They could think critically about poetry and expressed their ideas in coherent literary essays supported by well-chosen quotations. By Year 11, all students were able to construct logical, discursive essays in increasingly accurate style. Students with SEND made equally outstanding progress due to skilful provision for their needs.
- In 2015, almost three quarters of students in Year 11 attained Grade B or above in mathematics GCSE. Over the past three years, a large majority of students had attained results of grade B and above. Yet, results for Year 9 and 10 students in ISA tests were below international expectations. By the end of this phase, students showed strong skills in algebra, being able to express generalisations algebraically and model situations. They could solve a variety of problems involving equations, formulae, and functions. The large majority of students made better than expected progress over time and in lessons, with little difference in progress rates between girls and boys.
- In science, a large majority of students were above age-related curriculum standards. Most students undertook practical and investigative work and used a very good range of skills to support their work. They evaluated and analysed data collaboratively and critically. Students were confident, fluent and communicated their scientific knowledge skilfully orally, and in writing. Attainment over the past three years had been improving and was consistently above curriculum and comparative national standards.

Post-16

Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language	Not applicable	Not applicable
Arabic as an additional language	Not applicable	Not applicable
English	Outstanding	Outstanding
Mathematics	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑
Science	Outstanding ↑	Very good ↑

- Students' attainment in internal assessments in Islamic education was age-appropriate. Attainment and progress over time were broadly acceptable and in line with national curriculum standards. When the subject was taught in English to non-Arab students, they could explain more complicated concepts. Most students could talk and form realistic sentences related to their own lives about Islamic values such as the importance of education in Islam. The limited opportunities provided for the higher ability students did not allow them to make good progress.
- Attainment in English literature, when measured against national and international curriculum standards, was outstanding. Students demonstrated excellent understanding of a range of demanding literary texts and could critically analyse and discuss texts such as, 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles'. Literary appreciation skills were highly developed by the end of Year 13. This was further exemplified in their written work and with their skilful ability to review their writing, reflect on strengths and weaknesses and apply their skills to further improvement. Students' outstanding progress was shown in their abilities to select and research modern and traditional texts; they produced written work of high quality. All groups of students made similarly excellent progress.
- In mathematics, A-level results in 2015 were outstanding. Over the past three years, the attainment of a large majority of students had also been above the UK national standards. In lessons and in their recent work, most students demonstrated levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that were above curriculum standards. Students could reason with information, draw conclusions and make generalisations. Similarly, they could reason with data from several sources or unfamiliar representations to solve multi-step problems. Boys made better progress than girls.
- Students were able to think for themselves in science and create their own questions in scientific enquiry. They were confident and competent in the full range of practical skills, taking the initiative in planning, carrying out recording, and evaluating their own scientific investigations. They frequently used their scientific knowledge and understanding in written and verbal explanations, solving challenging problems and reporting scientific findings formally. They researched contemporary issues and understood the impact of science on society.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Outstanding

- Students consistently engaged themselves in and took responsibility for their own learning. They reflected deeply on their own learning to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. Independent learning was a strength, especially in the Foundation Stage and secondary phase. For example, students were able to make choices and decisions in science through their 'learning menus'. Children in the Foundation Stage, were able to work with minimum supervision.
- Students worked collaboratively and often for sustained periods of time. They contributed keenly and showed respect for the views of others. In some lessons, students were able to give fellow students recommendations on how to improve their work. In primary, students communicated their learning clearly when they implemented the 'talking partners' activity. In English, students enjoyed role-play activities and worked collaboratively to devise scenarios for their persuasive writing.
- Across the school most students were able to apply their learning to the real world and made very good connections between different areas of learning. For example, in English, students were encouraged to make connections with the UAE culture, including the history of Dubai. In science, students studied the circulatory system and related it to staying fit and healthy.
- The use of learning technologies was well developed. Students used laptops, iPads and mobile phones effectively for independent research and to assess their learning. In English, students researched the historical background of the, 'Knights of the Round Table' and wrote a prequel of the story. Innovation, critical thinking and problem-solving were increasingly evident in subjects, such as science and were especially strong in the Foundation Stage and Post-16.

## 2. Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students had extraordinarily mature attitudes towards learning and to the world around them. Right from the Foundation Stage, their self-reliance and self-discipline enabled them to learn happily and without controversy. They exchanged opinions readily and were comfortable learning from one another and from staff through constructive feedback and debate.
- Students' behaviour was exemplary. In lessons, time was rarely lost because students were almost always responsive and courteous to teachers and eager to learn.
- Excellent relationships were a prevalent in almost all lessons. Teachers were skilful in the way they genuinely valued the contributions of each student and in the way they did so. As a result, students were respectful not only to the staff but to each another.
- Students embraced and participated in healthy lifestyle living. Sport and being active were prominent features of the school – encouraged and embraced by the students and their teachers. Students were well aware, from an early age, of the need to eat sensibly and most but not all were content to do so.
- Attendance was good, with only small variations across phases. Punctuality was excellent which supported the keen attitude towards learning displayed by children and students in the school.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Students had a clear but not fully developed understanding of how Islamic values influences the community in which they live. They appreciated that life in the UAE may be different, but their varied knowledge of Islam, limited their full appreciation.
- Similarly, students did not have an in-depth knowledge of the heritage and culture of the UAE. They knew key facts about buildings, water, industries and modern business, but did not appreciate the influence of history for example, the reasons for the rapid growth of Dubai. However, students participated in various activities that broadened their awareness of the UAE culture and made them more integrated with it.
- Students were aware of the importance of the relationship between their own culture and that of others. They knew it is important to discover the differences between cultures as well as the similarities. However, not all students showed sufficient interest and knowledge about the different cultures of their peers.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Social responsibility and innovation skills</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students talked enthusiastically about the wide range of initiatives they led and managed to make positive contribution to their local and wider community. They took part in talent shows and sports activities to raise funds for Dubai Autism Centre, breast cancer and shoe box appeal for Nepal.
- A very positive work attitude was displayed by students across the school. They initiated their own projects through the student council, pop council, prefects and charity committee to raise funds and make reasoned decisions as to which charity they should support. They produced and performed their own plays in talent shows and raised funds from products they made.
- Students were very well aware of environmental issues locally and globally. They instigated and were involved in various environmental projects. In the Foundation Stage, children took part in the 'Forest School', in which they grew and looked after their own plants. Primary and secondary students were actively involved in recycling projects and improving the school environment through the Eco-club.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- Across the phases, most teachers had strong subject knowledge and a well-developed understanding of pedagogy. This resulted in learner-centred teaching and high levels of engagement of students in purposeful learning experiences based on discovery, practical application and integration of skills. Most teachers were skilful at delivering lessons that had clear expectations and stimulating content. In the Foundation Stage, there was an appropriate balance of adult and child-led activities.
- Lesson planning was consistently effective. In the Foundation Stage, teachers designed activities that were interesting and accelerated learning. Lessons generally were well structured, with cross-curricular links such as, the 'wow' curriculum in primary science. Learning objectives were mostly challenging but success criteria were not always shared with students, particularly in science, Islamic education and Arabic.
- Most teachers interacted well with students and promoted meaningful dialogue in lessons. High-quality questioning was a common feature of most lessons; it was generally open-ended and promoted students' higher-order thinking, active participation and reflection on learning. Teachers used probing questions effectively to check understanding and assess progress.
- Most teachers applied a very good range of strategies that took into consideration the individual needs of students. Differentiated activities ensured that most students, including those with SEND, were suitably challenged. However in a few subjects, particularly Arabic as a first language and Islamic education in the upper phases, teachers did not give enough attention to the students' varied abilities.
- The promotion of critical thinking, problem-solving and investigative and independent learning varied in quality. For instance, while this was a strength in secondary science, it was an area for development in post-16 mathematics. Opportunities in English for students to think critically and learn independently in Islamic education and Arabic, particularly in the upper years, were often limited. In the Foundation Stage, staff enabled children to explore for themselves.
- The quality of teaching in Arabic as a first language varied considerably between the primary and other phases in the school. Primary teachers had a good understanding of how students learn key language skills and provided engaging learning activities. In the upper phases, teachers were too controlling and did not provide enough scope for students to take responsibility for their own learning.
- In Arabic as an additional language, teachers provided an interesting learning environment with appropriate resources that enabled students to learn. The strategies used were not always sufficiently personalised to meet the individual needs of students.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Assessment	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- Internal assessment processes in the Foundation Stage provided accurate and reliable measures of academic and personal progress. The assessment systems in the other phases were closely linked to the curriculum standards and provided increasingly reliable measures of achievement. In Islamic education and Arabic, assessment processes had improved, but there was still a lack of consistency in their reliability and usefulness.
- External benchmarks, such as the UK national average for a Good Level of Development (GLD) in the Foundation Stage and with GCSE and A-level results in the secondary and post-16 phases were used. In Arabic as an additional language, there was no system available for comparing outcomes to international or national outcomes. Assessments were internally moderated. Foundation Stage compared outcomes with an outstanding school in the UK.
- Middle leaders made very effective use of data to monitor students' progress at regular intervals during the school year. Their findings were used to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum, and to hold teachers to account, for targets to be set and for the progress of individuals and groups to be monitored over time.
- Foundation Stage assessment data were used successfully to plan next steps. In the other phases, the use of assessment information was generally very good, but more variable. In the best lessons, teachers were skilful in using information to modify the curriculum and to provide specific interventions to ensure progress.
- Teachers knew their students well and used this knowledge to set targets which were well matched to individuals. They provided regular constructive feedback, orally and in writing, so that students knew what they had done well and what they needed to do to improve. In the best lessons, students were accustomed to reflecting on their own learning and that of their peers, measuring progress against their targets.

#### 4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The curriculum had a very clear rationale and met the needs of students extremely well. In addition to a strong academic aspect, enrichment through sports, art, music, drama, the performing arts and visits within the UAE gave students an exceptionally wide range of experiences. As a result, the curriculum promoted interest, enjoyment and diversity for almost all students.
- Teachers' careful planning meant that the curriculum progressed seamlessly through the school in almost all subjects. As a result, most students were successfully prepared for the next stages of their education, including transfer to schools in the UK and other international schools.
- Curriculum options provided excellent opportunities for students to choose subjects that suited their abilities and interests. Since the previous inspection, vocational education had become more established within the programmes of study.
- Cross-curricular design promoted independent learning, research skills and critical thinking. The primary curriculum had a thematic approach, based on the English National Curriculum. Across the school there were many opportunities for students to link subjects through topics and project work. For example, in one science class, students were investigating how nutrients are absorbed into the bloodstream and built models of the small intestine.
- The curriculum was regularly reviewed and developed to meet students' needs. Senior leaders routinely shared ideas and evaluated the impact of the curriculum on students' learning skills and progress. As a consequence of their reviews, older students were offered GCSE options within languages allowing students with linguistic talents to study up to three modern foreign languages.
- The reviews from the senior leaders resulted in integrating the Arabic social studies into the Key Stage 3 curriculum, with other references made elsewhere.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum adaptation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The curriculum was very effectively planned to provide stimulating learning experiences for all groups of students. It incorporated modifications, such as IGCSE English language which had led to higher achievement. Adaptations ensured engagement and challenge for students, including fast track GCSEs for science and mathematics, and BTEC subjects in post-16. The curriculum was very well adapted to meet the needs of students with SEND.
- The curriculum was interesting, motivating and diverse. Considerable flexibility and innovation in the recently introduced primary 'wow' curriculum brought together cross-curricular topics and allowed individual students to learn in their own ways. There were many opportunities to experience a range of extra-curricular opportunities, such as diving and 'Forest School' established to provide enhanced learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage.

- The primary curriculum included programmes which had begun to develop students' knowledge and understanding of the heritage of the UAE. This included Emirati traditions, culture and the values which influence UAE society. Older students' knowledge was not as extensive as it could be, nor was the curriculum for Arabic, Islamic Education and Social Studies fully consolidated to ensure coverage of the culture and heritage of the UAE.
- The school provided one lesson of Arabic each week for children in Foundation Stage 2 as a preparation for their learning of Arabic in Year 1.

### 5. The protection, care, guidance and support of students

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students felt safe in school. The school had robust procedures to deal with rare incidents of bullying. Staff ensured that students had a thorough understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when they used the internet and social media. There was a comprehensive child protection policy in place and staff were fully aware of procedures.
- The school placed the health and well-being of the students at the heart of its work. The environment was very hygienic and secure. The supervision of students, particularly as they arrived and left the site, was exceptionally well managed. All visitors, including parents, wore colour-coded lanyards for swift and clear identification.
- The premises were maintained to an exceptionally high quality. There were frequent fire drills and any incidents were swiftly followed up to minimise further risks. The clinic staff provided high levels of care for students and kept meticulous records.
- The school promoted inclusion and the physical environment was accessible to all. Lifts and ramps enabled students with physical needs full use of the premises and facilities.
- The school successfully promoted healthy lifestyles across school life. The canteen provided healthy and nutritious meals, and parents responded very well to the school's encouragement to provide healthy food in lunchboxes. A wide variety of sporting and fitness activities ensured ample scope for physical exercise. The school ensured that students were protected from the sun by providing shaded areas and making sure that students wore hats.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Care and support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- There was an ethos of mutual respect and trust amongst the members of the school community. Teachers understood students' needs and showed high levels of care and concern. There was a very clear system of rewards and sanctions to promote good behaviour and students understood the consequences of their actions.
- The school had effective procedures to promote attendance and punctuality which were successful. Unexplained absences were swiftly followed up.
- The school had established thorough procedures to identify students with SEND. Detailed assessments were made as children and students joined the school. Staff were qualified to undertake identification and, when necessary, involved a range of other professionals to make further assessments. Parents and teachers also made valuable contributions to the process.
- The support for students with SEND was very effective and enabled almost all students to make rapid progress. Immediately after identification, learning plans were put in place and, throughout the school, these were skilfully tailored to meet students' individual needs. Plans were devised to include scope to develop self-esteem and resilience, supporting students to become active and independent learners.
- The school closely monitored students' personal development and specialist staff followed up any concerns sensitively. Students valued the access to a range of trusted adults, especially the school counsellor, to whom they could turn when they had concerns. The school was very effective in providing careers guidance which enabled older students to make informed choices about higher education opportunities.

### Provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

The overall effectiveness of provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities

Outstanding 

- The school leaders had established an inclusive ethos where all students were welcomed and valued. High-quality policies and plans successfully promoted the inclusion of students with SEND. Well-qualified and experienced specialist support staff and class teachers were skilled at removing barriers to students' learning.
- Thorough procedures were in place to identify students with SEND. Detailed assessments were made before children and students joined the school. Staff were qualified to undertake identification processes and, when necessary, called upon a range of other professionals to make further evaluations. Parents and teachers also made valuable contributions to the process.
- The school worked very closely with parents throughout their children's time at the school and was very effective in involving them in their children's academic and personal development. Parents valued the opportunities for regular contact with staff to review their children's progress, as well as talking through any concerns.

- Staff were very skilled at understanding the different needs and learning styles of students with SEND and made effective modifications to ensure that students' needs were met. As a result, students developed considerable self-esteem and resilience, and became active learners. Students who at one time lacked confidence were able to lead group work and articulate their ideas.
- Students' academic and personal progress was carefully tracked. Teachers made good use of the assessment information to plan and modify interventions which closely matched students' needs. Students were actively involved in designing their own support and knew what they found difficult and how others could help them. Most made rapid progress over time.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Outstanding

- The leadership of the school, inspired by the principal, was dynamic, cohesive and highly focused on school improvement.
- Leaders were eager to develop to embrace new ideas and best practice. They were especially successful in creating a harmonious and purposeful learning environment.
- Senior leaders were knowledgeable, aspirational and motivational, with the result that morale was high among staff and all stakeholders were valued and included.
- There was a clear and supportive management structure throughout the school, although its impact was not wholly consistent. This variability meant that not all subjects were developing equally strongly across the school.
- The school sustained high quality in key areas such as the curriculum and the Foundation Stage, and continued to improve overall.

### School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Very good ↑

- Senior leaders were very well aware of the school's strengths and in what way it needed to improve.
- They were adept at checking the quality of teaching and learning, although subject leaders were not as involved as they might be.
- Leaders drew considered conclusions from their analyses of the school to produce accurate focuses for improvement. For example, the school was acutely aware of the need to develop students' knowledge of the UAE culture and Islamic values.
- The school had worked hard on the recommendations from the last report with much success. Progress in Arabic and Islamic education had improved but attainment was behind that of other subjects.

Partnerships with parents and the community	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents had a high regard for the school and were fully involved in its development and day-to-day life. Their opinions clearly mattered a great deal to the school, and the Parents Advisory Board was increasingly pro-active.</li> <li>• Channels of communication between parents and school were excellent. Information was freely exchanged on the school's website and staff were accessible and welcoming. Parents of students with SEND were very supportive and fully involved with their children's education.</li> <li>• Academic reports were very detailed and contained clear references to attainment with useful data to show parents how their children compared with UK standards. There was excellent advice to show parents how their children could improve further. There was very good reference to students' personal development but not so much on progress and learning skills.</li> <li>• The school was an integral part of the local community. There were also strong links in the wider city with businesses, agencies and schools. Through this network, staff shared valuable expertise and developed new skills to enhance the learning experience of students.</li> </ul>	

Governance	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The governing board had an intimate and precise knowledge of the school. This was gained not just by their regular interaction with the school but also by ascertaining the views of all stakeholders. The school advisory board acted as a valuable sounding board for many school decisions and was beginning to be more pro-active. However, it was not fully functioning as a representative of parents' opinions.</li> <li>• The governing board was rightly proud of its successful role as a critical friend of the school. Its detailed knowledge of the school enabled governors to monitor its progress authoritatively. The focus on the outcomes for students was central to the governors' work and they showed a resolute but sensitive pursuit of this goal.</li> <li>• Governors played a full part in the school's development. They provided wise counsel but also allowed school leaders the freedom to develop the school. Governors were very good at supporting students' learning with appropriate resources, including the newly introduced international benchmark tests. They ensured that the school meets all its statutory requirements.</li> </ul>	

**Management, staffing, facilities and resources**

Outstanding

- The school ran very smoothly. Its systems and routines were highly organised so as to maximise the learning time and scope for students' learning. The channels of communication throughout the school were clear and comprehensive.
- The school was shrewd in its appointment of new teachers and scrupulous in ensuring their suitability. The turnover of teaching staff was modest and excellent procedures ensured that all new staff were quickly assimilated into the school. Staff training was continuous and very well linked to the school's priorities and teachers' individual needs.
- The school was extremely well resourced. Its extensive range of books, IT hardware and science equipment were good examples of how the school supports its rich curriculum to benefit students' learning experiences. Classrooms were stimulating, with abundant learning resources and excellent use of mobile technology.
- The well-designed building allowed for large classrooms which were developed by teachers to provide motivational learning areas, especially in the Foundation Stage and the primary phase. There was a wide range of specialist rooms and outdoor facilities, including a swimming pool. The school was eager to develop its sports facilities further but was constrained by the size of its site.

## The views of the parents, teachers and students

Before the inspection, the views of the parents, teachers and senior secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form inspection judgements. A summary of the survey statistics and comments from those who responded to the survey follows:

Responses to the surveys		
Responses received	Number	
<b>Parents*</b> 	2015-2016	189
	2014-2015	208
<b>Teachers</b> 	51	
<b>Students</b> 	365	

\*The number of responses from parents is based on the number of families.

- The 189 responses from parents were overwhelmingly positive. They had a high regard for all aspects of the school and had no significant concerns, although a few were not satisfied with the range of extra-curricular activities.
- Teachers were similarly happy with the school, although a few expressed some concern about the quality of feedback from their line manager.
- The responses from students were much the same as those of their parents but not quite so positive. Few students liked learning Arabic. A minority had concerns about homework and not being treated fairly. About a third of them did not feel that the school listened enough to their views.

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report, you should contact [inspection@khda.gov.ae](mailto:inspection@khda.gov.ae)